

## **Geographic Review Panel 4 – San Joaquin River**

**Proposal number:** 2001-I213 **Short Proposal Title:** Educating Farmers and Landowners in Biological Resource Management

**1. Applicability to CALFED ERP Goals and Implementation Plan and CVPIA priorities, and relevance to ERP and CVPIA priorities for your region.** We agree with Staff that the proposal could generate significant water quality benefits and habitat improvements over time. This program will also meet the CALFED education goal as described in the PSP. Educational farmer-to-farmer forums have proven to have positive effects on farmers in nearby areas and adjacent counties within the San Joaquin Valley. The applicant has been a leader in the San Joaquin Valley promoting sustainable approaches with family farmers. The applicant has had no difficulty recruiting farmers to participate in their programs in the past and usually have waiting lists of interested growers.

**2. Linkages/coordination with previously funded projects or other restoration activities in your region.** Yes, applicant successfully completed numerous grants which have expanded the dialogue in reducing the use of harsh pesticides, improving soil fertility and addressing dairy & livestock waste issues in the San Joaquin Valley. Applicant has attracted more diversity and community stakeholders to better understand resource concerns leading to change. Workshops, tours and regular meetings are well attended and attract participants from throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The proposed project also has a direct connection to the Merced River stakeholder group.

**3. Feasibility, especially the project's ability to move forward in a timely and successful manner.** The Panel agrees with the TARP that the applicant has many years of experience in providing these types of educational experiences. They have conducted very successful meetings in the northern San Joaquin Valley on diverse topics related to sustainable agriculture.

**4. Qualifications of the applicants and others involved in implementing the proposed project.** Very qualified and capable with a successful track record. The management teams include very dedicated people who are very capable of managing the implementation of this project.

**5. Local involvement (including environmental compliance).** We agree with the TARP conclusions. The very core of this organization is local involvement. They have a long track record of community process that is inclusive of anyone who wants to get involved. RCD & NRCS support and assistance with planning appear to be offered.

**6. Cost.** We agree with the TARP that costs seem very high. An extensive budget has been prepared for projects in 2 geographic areas (Merced & Yolo). The applicant has not provided a means of scaling back the project or separating the two geographic areas.

**7. Cost sharing.** None. Panel recommends that the applicants find cost share partners.

**8. Additional comments.** Applicant has been very successful obtaining grants in the past using a similar template (8-10 growers per area) to begin a movement in the community that has beneficially changed the way farmers perceive the need for change. The San Joaquin Valley is in continuing need of attracting diverse audiences and promoting progressive dialogue leading to change. Panel questions the monitoring associated with this project and feels that projects of this type need to be tied to direct measurements of water quality benefits.

---

## **Regional**

**Panel Ranking:** Medium high

**Provide a brief explanation of your ranking:** The San Joaquin Valley is in continuing need of attracting diverse audiences and promoting progressive dialogue leading to change. The applicants have the demonstrated ability to accomplish this important goal, however the Panel questions the high cost of the proposed work relative to the regional benefits. This Panel would give this proposal a higher ranking if the costs were better justified.